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TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Applications
Washington D.C. 20231

Attorney Docket No.017344-0290

(must include alphanumeric codes if no inventors named)

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
(new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of:

INVENTOR(S): Kunihiko WAKABAYASHI

TITLE: VOICE MAIL APPARATUS AND METHOD OF PROCESSING VOICE MAIL

In connection with this application, the following are enclosed:

APPLICATION ELEMENTS:

XX Specification - 12 TOTAL PAGES

(preferred arrangement:)

- Descriptive Title of the Invention
- Cross Reference to Related Applications
- Statement Regard Fed sponsored R&D
- Reference to Microfiche Appendix
- Background of the Invention
- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure

XX Drawings - Total Sheets 4

XX Declaration and Power of Attorney - Total Sheets 2

XX Newly executed (original or copy)

___ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))

(relates to continuation/divisional boxes completed) - NOTE: Box below

___ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S) - Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s)
named in the prior application, see 37 CFR 1.63(d) (2) and 1.33(b).

___ Incorporation By Reference (useable if copy of prior application
Declaration being submitted)

The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a COPY of the
oath or declaration is supplied as noted above, is considered as being
part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby
incorporated by reference therein.

___ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)

___ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable,
all necessary)

___ Computer Readable Copy

___ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)

___ Statement verifying identify of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

XX Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))

___ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee)

___ English Translation Document (if applicable)

___ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) with PTO-1449. ___ Copies of IDS Citations

___ Preliminary Amendment

XX Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)

☐ Small Entity Statement(s)
☐ Statement file in prior application, status still proper and desired.
☒ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) with Claim of Priority
(if foreign priority is claimed).
☒ OTHER: Check for \$878.00

If a **CONTINUING APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP)
of prior application Serial No. .

☐ Amend the specification by inserting before the first line the following sentence: --This application is a ☐ continuation, ☐ divisional or ☐ continuation-in-part of application Serial No. , filed .--

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:

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FEE CALCULATIONS: (Small entity fees indicated in parentheses.)

(1) For	(2) Number Filed	(3) Number Extra	(4) Rate	(5) Basic Fee \$760 (\$380)
Total Claims	16 - 20 =	0	x \$18 (x \$09)	0.00
Independent Claims	4 - 3 =	1	x \$78 (x \$39)	78.00
Multiple Dependent Claims			\$260 (\$135)	0.00
Assignment Recording Fee per property			\$40	40.00
			TOTAL FEE:	\$878.00

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

A check in the amount of the above TOTAL FEE is attached. If payment is enclosed, this amount is believed to be correct; however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 20, 1999
Docket No.: 017344-0290

for Phillip J. Blumenthal
David A. Blumenthal
Reg. No. 26,257

Reg. No.
33819

**VOICE MAIL APPARATUS AND METHOD OF PROCESSING
VOICE MAIL**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

- 5 *The present invention relates to a voice mail apparatus and a method of processing voice mail, which may be usable in exchanging, within a computer network, information by voice message or document with voice message attachment.*

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- 10 *The term "voice mail service" is herein used to mean a service to store digitized voice message from a sender into a memory accessible by a receiver and to take out document data from the sender in terms of voice message. A voice mail apparatus employed for such a voice mail service includes a*
15 *memory provided in an information network. Storage regions of the memory are assigned to registered terminals, respectively.*

- 20 *According to a known voice mail apparatus, among voice mail users registered at the apparatus, a voice mail sender can send a voice mail to a voice mail receiver and the voice mail receiver can reply to the voice mail sender by calling the voice mail sender.*

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

- 25 *An object of the present invention is to provide a voice mail apparatus and a method of processing voice mail wherein a voice mail receiver can reply to a voice mail sender quickly and without calling the voice mail sender.*

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a voice mail apparatus comprising:

- 30 *a memory to store received digitized voice from a sender;*
an identifier to identify the sender that has sent the digitized voice; and

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a table containing plural addresses against plural senders, respectively.

According to a specific aspect of the present invention, there is provided a voice mail apparatus comprising:

5 *a memory to store received digitized voice from a sender;*

an identifier to identify a proper sender number of the sender that has sent the digitized voice; and

10 *a table containing plural addresses against plural proper sender numbers of plural senders, respectively.*

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of processing voice mail comprising the steps of:

15 *identifying a sender of digitized voice upon taking out the digitized voice from a memory; and*

performing retrieval of a table to find an address of the sender.

20 *According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of processing voice mail comprising the steps of:*

identifying a proper number of a sender of digitized voice upon taking out the digitized voice from a memory; and

performing retrieval of a table to find an address corresponding to the proper number.

25 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Figure 1 is a block diagram illustrating a preferred embodiment of a voice mail apparatus according to the present invention.

30 *Figure 2 is a block diagram illustrating a communication network into which the voice mail apparatus is placed.*

Figure 3 illustrates content of information on a table within the voice mail apparatus.

Figure 4 is a flow diagram of a processing flow.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 shows an embodiment of a voice mail apparatus 20 according to the present invention. The voice mail apparatus 20 includes a control unit 21, a line interface 24, an E-mail transmitter 22, a memory 23, a sender number identifier 26 and a table 25. The control unit 21 controls the line interface 24, E-mail transmitter 22, memory 23, sender number identifier 26 and table 25.

The line interface 24 interconnects the voice mail apparatus 20 and a private branch exchange 30 (see Figure 2). The E-mail transmitter 22 transmits E-mail to a E-mail server 10 (see Figure 2). The memory 23 stores voice mails and the sender number identifier 26 identifies a sender number attached to each received voice mail. The table 25 stores E-mail addresses against sender numbers.

Figure 2 illustrates a network incorporating the embodiment of voice mail apparatus 20 according to the present invention. In this network, the voice mail apparatus 20 is connected to a local area network (LAN) 70. The LAN 70 includes E-mail server 10 and plural computers 50 and connected via gateway 80 to computer network 90. The gateway 80 may take the form of a provider. The computer network 90 may take the form of internet and/or intranet.

The voice mail apparatus 20 is connected to a private branch exchange 30 including plural telephone sets 60. The private branch exchange 30 is connected to a public telephone line network 40.

Telephone sets 61 and 62 are connected to the public telephone line network 40. The telephone set 62 may take the form of a subscribed telephone set in a family 71. The family 71 may have a computer, preferably, a personal computer 51, connected to the computer network 90.

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In the embodiment, the table 25 stores E-mail addresses corresponding to sender numbers of the subscribers of this voice mail service.

As shown in Figure 3, the table 25 stores E-mail addresses B1, B2 ... Bn corresponding to sender numbers A1, A2 ... An, respectively.

The flow diagram of Figure 4 illustrates a control routine of the preferred implementation of the present invention. It is now assumed that the telephone set 62 sends a voice mail to the telephone set 61. The telephone set 62 is connected via the public telephone line network 40 and the private branch exchange 30 to the voice mail apparatus 20. The voice mail apparatus 20 stores the voice mail in the memory 23. In step 101, the control routine determines whether or not the voice mail apparatus 20 has received any new voice mail. The control routine repeats this determination in step 101 unless new voice mail has been stored in the memory 23. Immediately after the memory 23 has stored new voice mail, the control routine proceeds from step 101 to step 102 and the sender number identifier 26 identifies sender number A2 corresponding to the telephone set 62. The voice mail apparatus 20 holds the voice mail at an address corresponding to the sender number A2 within the memory 23. In step 102, the control routine determines whether or not the telephone set 61 has taken out the voice mail from the telephone set 62 from the memory 23. The telephone set 61 is connected to the voice mail apparatus 20 via the public telephone line network 40 and the private branch exchange 30. The control routine repeats this determination in step 102 unless the telephone set 61 has taken out the voice mail from the memory 23.

Immediately after the telephone set 61 has taken out the voice mail from the memory 23, the control routine

0023475-012099

determines whether or not a reply request by the telephone set 61 is available in step 103. In this implementation, dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signaling is used to send this request.

5 If, in step 103, it is determined that there is no reply request from the telephone set 61, the control routine comes to an end. If, in step 103, there is reply request from the telephone set 61, the control routine proceeds to step 104. In step 104, the control unit 21 determines whether or not the sender number A2 is available in the table 25.

10 If, in step 104, it is determined that the table 25 contains the sender number A2, the control routine proceeds to step 105. In step 105, the control unit 21 determines whether or not the table 25 contains an E-mail address B2 corresponding to the sender number A2 after performing retrieval operation of the table 25 against the sender number A2. If, in step 105, the control unit 21 finds the E-mail address B2 corresponding to the sender number A2, the interrogation in this step results in affirmative. Then, the control routine proceeds to step 107.

15 If the interrogation in step 104 results in negative or the interrogation in step 105 results in negative, the control routine proceeds to step 106. This is the case where the table 25 does not contain the sender number A2 or the E-mail address B2 corresponding to the sender number A2. In this case, the voice mail apparatus 20 sends to the telephone set 61 voice announcement that reply by E-mail is impossible (step 106) before the control routine comes to an end.

20 Unless the telephone set 61 receives the voice announcement that reply by E-mail is impossible, the telephone set 61 may send its operator voice reply message to the voice mail apparatus 20. The memory 23 stores the operator voice reply message. In step 107, the control unit 21

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determines whether or not the memory 23 has stored the operator voice reply message sent by the telephone set 61.

The control routine repeats this determination in step 107 unless the memory 23 has stored the operator voice reply message. If, in step 107, it is determined that the memory has stored the voice reply message, the control routine proceeds to step 108.

In step 108, the voice mail apparatus 20 sends to an E-mail server 10 an E-mail against the E-mail address B2 from a proper E-mail address of the voice mail apparatus 20. Specifically, The E-mail transmitter 22 transmits the E-mail with the voice reply message attachment via the LAN 70 to the E-mail server 10.

The E-mail server 10 sends the E-mail with the voice reply message attachment to the computer 51 having the E-mail address B2 via the LAN 70 and the computer network 90. E-mail receiver may hear the voice reply message attached to the E-mail by operating the computer 51.

If it is desired to read voice reply message in terms of sentences, the voice mail apparatus may be modified to have a media converter to convert voice reply message into text for sending as E-mail. In this case, receiver of the E-mail can read the voice reply message.

The voice mail apparatus may have a table containing E-mail addresses against voice mail users, respectively. Using this table, the voice mail apparatus uses E-mail address of a voice mail user as a sender address in sending a reply E-mail to a receiver. In this case, the receiver can recognize the sender before taking out the reply message.

From the preceding description of the embodiments, it is appreciated that a voice mail receiver can reply to a voice mail sender quickly and without any call to the sender.

The above-described voice mail implementation of the

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present invention is an example implementation. Moreover, various modifications to the present invention may occur to those skilled in the art and will fall within the scope of the present invention as set forth below.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A voice mail apparatus comprising:
2 a memory to store received digitized voice from a
3 sender;
4 an identifier to identify the sender that has sent the
5 digitized voice; and
6 a table containing plural addresses against plural
7 senders, respectively.
- 1 2. A voice mail apparatus comprising:
2 a memory to store received digitized voice from a
3 sender;
4 an identifier to identify a proper sender number of the
5 sender that has sent the digitized voice; and
6 a table containing plural addresses against plural proper
7 sender numbers of plural senders, respectively.
- 1 3. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein
2 the memory also stores received digitized document.
- 1 4. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein
2 the memory also stores received digitized document.
- 1 5. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further
2 comprises a transmitter to transmit digitized reply document
3 and digitized reply voice.
- 1 6. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 2, further
2 comprises a transmitter to transmit digitized reply document
3 and digitized reply voice.

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1 7. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further
2 comprises:

3 a documentation converter to convert reply voice to
4 digitized reply document; and

5 a transmitter to transmit the digitized reply document to
6 the sender.

1 8. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 2, further
2 comprises:

3 a documentation converter to convert reply voice to
4 digitized reply document; and

5 a transmitter to transmit the digitized reply document to
6 the sender.

1 9. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further
2 comprises:

3 a documentation converter to convert reply voice to
4 digitized reply document; and

5 a transmitter to transmit the digitized reply document to
6 the sender.

1 10. The voice mail apparatus as claimed in claim 4, further
2 comprises:

3 a documentation converter to convert reply voice to
4 digitized reply document; and

5 a transmitter to transmit the digitized reply document to
6 the sender.

1 11. A method of processing voice mail comprising the steps
2 of:

3 identifying a sender of digitized voice upon taking out
4 the digitized voice from a memory; and

5 performing retrieval of a table to find an address of the

0923475-012099

6 sender.

1 12. A method of processing voice mail comprising the steps
2 of:

3 identifying a proper number of a sender of digitized voice
4 upon taking out the digitized voice from a memory; and
5 performing retrieval of a table to find an address
6 corresponding to the proper number.

1 13. The method of processing voice mail as claimed in claim
2 11, further comprising the step of:

3 transmitting digitized reply document and digitized reply
4 voice to the address that has been found after performing
5 retrieval of the table.

1 14. The method of processing voice mail as claimed in claim
2 12, further comprising the step of:

3 transmitting digitized reply document and digitized reply
4 voice to the address that has been found after performing
5 retrieval of the table.

1 15. The method of processing voice mail as claimed in claim
2 11, further comprises:

3 converting reply voice addressed to the sender to
4 digitized document; and

5 transmitting the digitized document to the address of the
6 sender.

1 16. The method of processing voice mail as claimed in claim
2 12, further comprises:

3 converting reply voice addressed to the sender to
4 digitized document; and

5 transmitting the digitized document to the address of the

0923475-012099

6 *sender.*

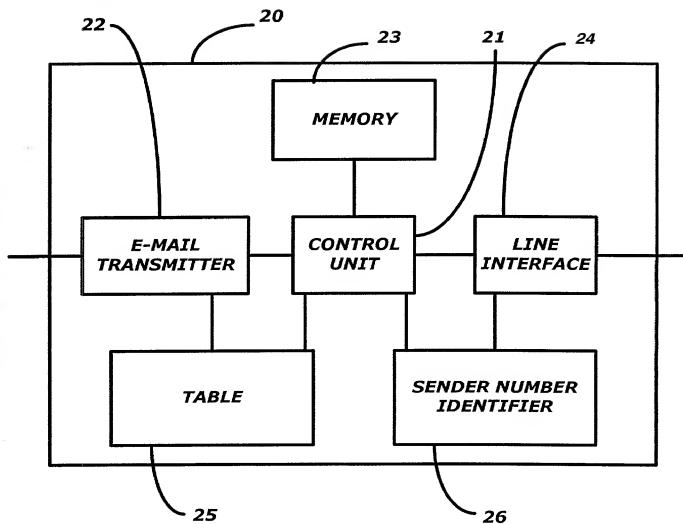
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

1 A voice mail apparatus and a method of processing voice
2 mail are provided. Upon taking out digitized voice from a
3 memory, a sender identifier identifies a proper number of a
4 sender of the digitized voice. A retrieval of a table is
5 performed to find an address corresponding to the proper
6 number. A documentation converter converts reply voice to
7 digitized document. The digitized document of the reply voice
8 is transmitted by a transmitter to an address of the sender.

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FIG. 1



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FIG. 2

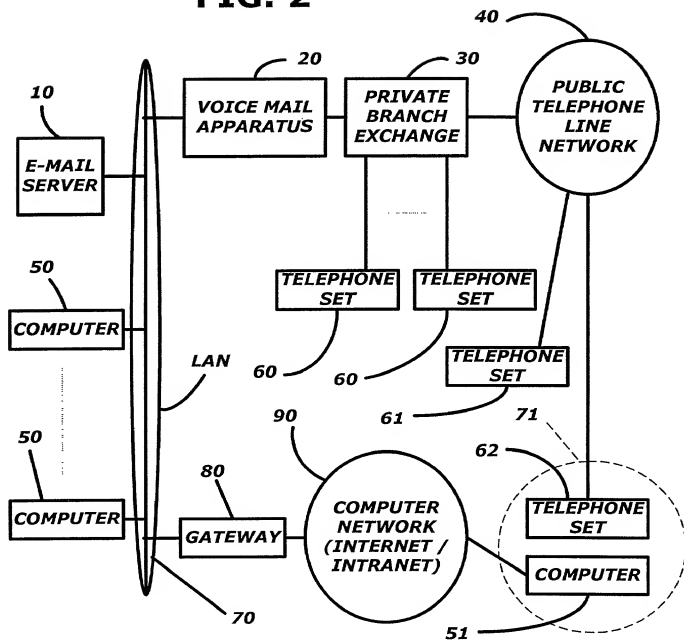
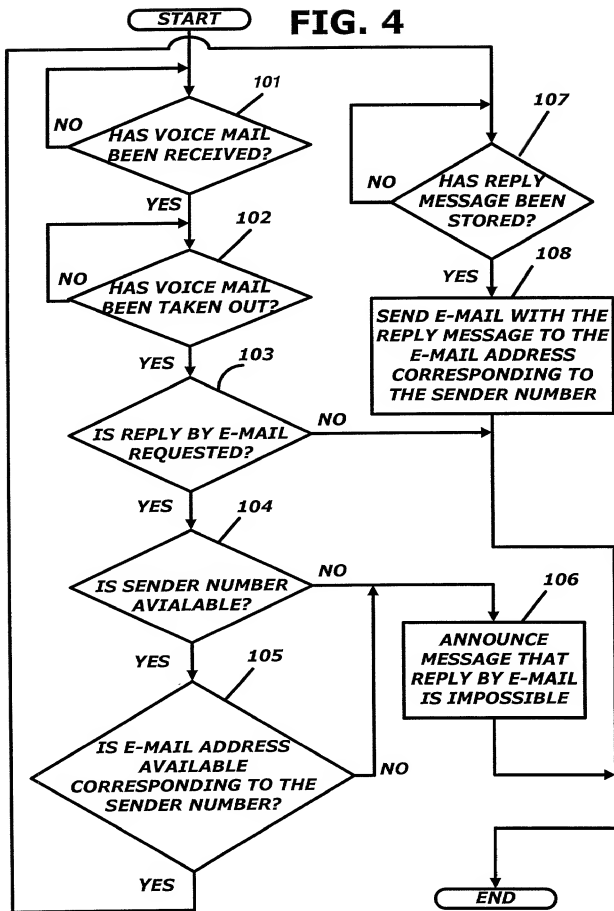


FIG. 3

<i>SENDER NUMBER</i>	<i>E-MAIL ADDRESS</i>
<i>A1</i>	<i>B1</i>
<i>A2</i>	<i>B2</i>
<i>A_n</i>	<i>B_n</i>

FIG. 4



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

02/554/98
NE-922-US
P×1/1
麻崎特許(印)

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

VOICE MAIL APPARATUS AND METHOD OF PROCESSING VOICE MAIL

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known by me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

NUMBER	COUNTRY	DAY/MONTH/YEAR FILED	PRIORITY CLAIMED
10-021554	Japan	20/January/1998	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is known by me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

APPLICATION SERIAL NO.	FILING DATE	STATUS: PATENTED, PENDING, ABANDONED


I hereby appoint as my attorneys, with full powers of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: Stephen A. Bent, Reg. No. 29,768; David A. Blumenthal, Reg. No. 26,257; John J. Feldhaus, Reg. No. 28,822; Donald D. Jeffery, Reg. No. 19,980; Eugene M. Lee, Reg. No. 32,039; Peter G. Mack, Reg. No. 26,001; Brian J. McNamara, Reg. No. 32,789; Sybil Meloy, Reg. No. 22,749; George E. Quillin, Reg. No. 32,792; Colin G. Sandercock, Reg. No. 31,298; Bernhard D. Saxe, Reg. No. 28,665; Charles F. Schill, Reg. No. 27,590; Richard L. Schwaab, Reg. No. 25,479; Arthur Schwartz, Reg. No. 22,115; Harold C. Wegner, Reg. No. 25,258.

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Post Office Address		

Full Name of Third Inventor	Signature of Third Inventor	Date
Residence Address	Country of Citizenship	
Post Office Address		

Full Name of Fourth Inventor	Signature of Fourth Inventor	Date
Residence Address	Country of Citizenship	
Post Office Address		

Full Name of Fifth Inventor	Signature of Fifth Inventor	Date
Residence Address	Country of Citizenship	
Post Office Address		

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